

Enclosure 2

SUMMARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY' S FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE STREAMLINING AND SIMPLIFICATION ACTIVITIES MAY 2001 THROUGH MAY 2002

I. Improve the Effectiveness and Performance of DOE Grant Programs

The Department of Energy is actively participating in all the interagency work groups that are developing common processes, forms, and systems for grant awards. DOE staff also attended the various meetings at which technical and functional requirements are discussed for the government-wide E-grants portal. DOE is currently reviewing its existing web-based system for posting acquisition solicitations, transmitting these solicitations to the GSA Government-wide FedBizOpps Internet site, and receiving electronic proposals to ensure that the system will conform to the requirements of the E-grants portal. In addition, DOE has volunteered to participate in the FedBizOpps pilot test for grants.

In January 1999, DOE designated the Department of Treasury' s Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) as its cash draw-down system. Since then the Department has converted in excess of 3200 grants to ASAP, which represents approximately 87 percent of the total grants to be converted. The Department is currently taking action to convert the remaining grants prior to the October 1, 2002, deadline.

II. Simplify the Grant Application and Reporting Process

DOE has been actively involved in the pre-award and E-grants work groups that are developing standard application data elements and a single electronic portal for application submission. DOE is also participating in the interagency reporting work group and led the team that developed the data elements and policy guidance for a government-wide summary invention report; this is the first common report developed under the Act and has established the approach for other common reports.

In addition, in FY 2002 DOE began receiving scientific and technical reports electronically through a new web-based system.. While the DOE system is only an interim solution pending the development of a government-wide E-grants portal for reporting, it has reduced copying and mailing costs for recipients and allowed DOE to provide better access to DOE-funded research results. It also allows DOE to more easily disseminate this information to multiple public outlets through links to DOE' s Web site.

III. Improve the Delivery of Services to the Public

DOE is a member of and actively participates in the Interagency Electronic Grants Committee

(IAEGC) State and Local Government Work Group and the Federal Demonstration Partnership (universities and Federal agencies). The IAEGC group is investigating ways to improve the delivery of services to the public and the Federal Demonstration Partnership is working to streamline and simplify the grants process for research institutions.

As part of DOE's effort to simplify and streamline its financial assistance requirements, the Department solicited comments from the grants community. DOE received comments from for-profit organizations requesting DOE to eliminate barriers that prevented these organizations from participating in the Department's financial assistance programs. In May 2001, DOE published a notice in the Federal Register soliciting comments and suggestions on whether DOE should initiate a rulemaking that prescribed administrative requirements that were specifically tailored for awards to for-profit organizations. The notice also requested comments on the specific changes proposed. Respondents provided comments on the proposed changes. These comments were considered in drafting the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which was published in the *Federal Register* on August 26, 2002.

IV. Facilitate Greater Communication Among Those Responsible for Delivering Services

DOE has actively participated in the following interagency work groups that were established to facilitate greater communication among Federal grant-making agencies and/or to implement the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act:

Grants Management Committee

E-Grants

Pre-award Work Group

Post Award Work Group

Reporting Subgroup

Audit Oversight Work Group

Interagency Electronic Grant Committee (IAEGC) State and Local Government

IAEGC Federal Commons

Grants Network